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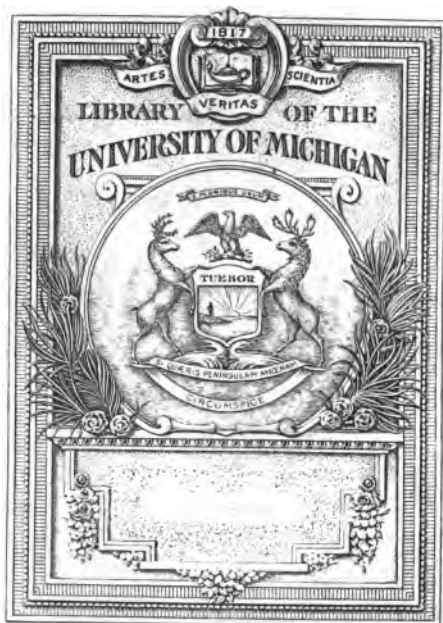
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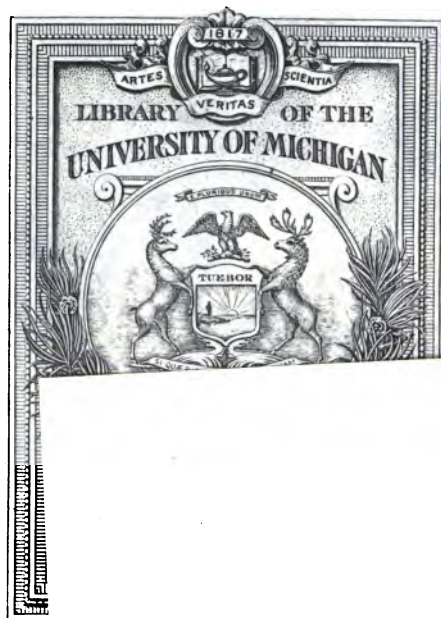


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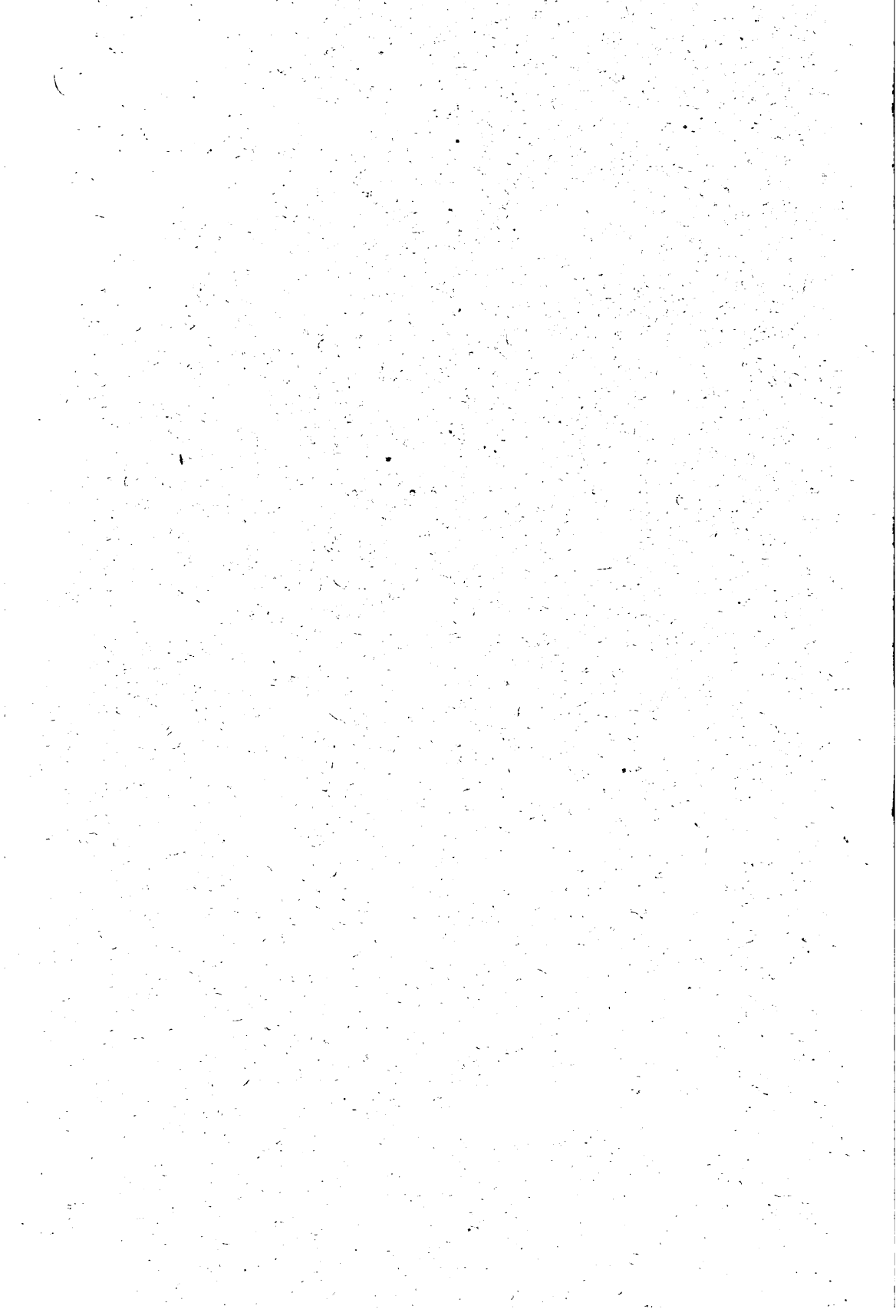
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The Present Obligations of the Scholar:

A Baccalaureate Address delivered by
President Charles Kendall Adams at the
University of Wisconsin, June 20, 1897.

THE PRESENT OBLIGATIONS OF THE SCHOLAR

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A BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS

BY

PRESIDENT CHARLES KENDALL ADAMS

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

JUNE 20, 1897.

MADISON, WIS.
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1897.

THE PRESENT OBLIGATIONS OF THE SCHOLAR.

This is the holy day of the educational year. As this period is the end of academic activity, so it is the Commencement of active and responsible life. It is the day when the scholar is married to his vocation. What could be more fitting than that this wedding festival should be held in the most glorious season of the year? The blossoms are commencing to be fruit; the voices of singing birds greet us wherever we go; the fragrance of new life is everywhere. By a kind of proscriptive custom the last week in June is coming to be to education what the last week in December is to religion. All over the land thousands are coming together with glad hearts to pay their annual tribute to the work that has been done and to crown with praises and with blessings the choicest fruits of the year.

To us who have come here today the season seems one of exceptional beauty. These hills have decked themselves with even more than their customary charms. These lakes hold up their mirrors to the surrounding scenes with even more than their accustomed pride. These trees and these lawns and these flowers seem to be rejoicing with more than their wonted vitality and gladness, for they have put on new smiles and a new splendor in recognition of these days.

“Ah, happy hills, ah, pleasing shade
* * * * *
I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.”

Within the last year the State has said to us "Well done, we are pleased with your stewardship; we will no longer give you the means of life simply from day to day, or from year to year, but we will enable you to plan your work broadly and largely in the full assurance that so long as you exercise care and wisdom in your trust you shall not fail of receiving our encouraging support." From this bountiful mother, we, her grateful children, are to receive no more than for the past years we have been receiving, but what we receive has been wisely and nobly relieved from the elements of uncertainty and contingency. In all our rejoicings of this day let us not forget this bountiful act of the bountiful mother of the University.

Indeed it seems to me that every thoughtful receiver of these benefactions must on this day of days reflect a little

his own obligations in consequence of these munificent favors. Even the most unmathematical of you can easily estimate the amount of the obligation, so far as it can be measured in dollars and cents. It cannot be repaid in kind, but repaid in one way or another, it must be, if you are to discharge your just obligations.

A part of what you have received has come from the State and a part from the general government. You have shared the benefits of that fixed policy of the nation in providing each of the states with the means of supporting and encouraging education in all its grades. Wisconsin has been one of the most favored beneficiaries of that wise and liberal policy. The state supplements this bequest with her own bounty and then transfers it all to her sons and daughters. It follows that your obligations are due directly to the State, and indirectly to the nation; to the University also, in so far as the institution has administered its trust beneficently and wisely, you are under obligations which I am sure you will not be slow to acknowledge and repay. How shall this debt be paid? This brings me to the subject I have chosen for to-day, namely:

THE PRESENT OBLIGATIONS OF THE SCHOLAR.

The old ideal of the scholar was founded on conditions which have now ceased to exist. The schools of the Middle Ages were not connected directly with the State; but a body of learned men came together and offered their instruction for the fees they received, somewhat as is now done in many of the summer schools. If the names of great benefactors have been preserved it is not because they bound their beneficiaries with any lasting obligations to the State; but rather because in the name of education they reared monuments to themselves and to themselves have established the obligations of perpetual gratitude. William of Wyckham, Queen Margaret, Henry the Sixth, and scores of others responded nobly to the calls of the civilization of their times. Let it not be supposed that the period of large gifts for education began within our own time. Whoever goes into the college grounds at Eton and remembers how many of England's greatest men have there received their inspiration and their impulse, will feel something akin to Gray's benediction:

"Ye antique spires, ye antique towers
That crown the watery glade,
Where grateful science still adores
Her Henry's holy shade;"

or, better still whoever happens to go into King's Chapel at Cambridge and recalls his Wordsworth can hardly help saying:

"Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned,
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed Scholars only — this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering — and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality."

But these thoughts, glorious, great, and inspiring as they are, seem to carry with them no pressing sense of direct obligation to the State. They give a certain emphasis and beauty to the idea of the scholar, but it is of the scholar as represented in the old plays. He was ever the consumer, and never the producer. He absorbed, and if he ever gave out what he had absorbed it was in the form of some abstruse contribution to knowledge rather than anything to the practical affairs of every day life. You think of the way the scholar was represented upon the stage. He was looked upon as practically a worthless member of society. He was perhaps the dried up husband of a termagant and was everywhere the victim of ridicule and practical jokes. However well he could read Sophocles and Pindar, he could scarcely put on his own cravat or tie his own shoe. John Henry Newman, in his volume entitled "Idea of a University," elaborately promulgated the notion that a university is not a place for investigating and discovering new truth, but a place for absorbing and perpetuating that which is old. Even James Russell Lowell confessed, almost with a kind of pride, that he once defined a university as "a place where nothing useful is taught."

Such notions were the natural fruit of the old method of endowment. If at that time the universities owed any special obligation to any institution whatever it was to the institution of the church. If there was any obligation on the part of the scholar, that obligation was to the church, and this feeling carried with it the moral obligation which the church always inculcated. So long as the church and the state were one, the scholar supported the state in defending its old abuses rather than in advocating ameliorations and reforms. He was true to Newman's "Idea." Every student of English history knows that the scholarship of Oxford has uniformly supported old and sanctified wrongs rather than modern and beneficent reforms, and if of late there have been signs of a change it must be

remembered that even England has finally come to make education, at least in some of its grades, an affair of the state.

But how different has been the field of the scholar where the state has regarded education as one of its chief concerns.

There was a time (as I have shown some of you in the course of the past semester) when the nation which is now the most powerful and influential in Continental Europe had been burned and ground into dust and ashes by the Great Destroyer. Some of the people had survived, but their government had been broken up; their institutions had been annihilated; their traditions had been disgraced; even their hopes seemed almost gone. Then it was that a great voice rang out over Europe, the "*Reden an die deutsche Nation*," Addresses to the German Nation, declaring that there was one way, and only one way in which the power and the influence of Germany could be revived. I know not whether, since the advent of Christianity, there has been anything more sublime in the history of civilization than the resounding cry of that German professor's voice. The roll of French drums and the rattle of French infantry came in through the windows as he spoke. The French marshal in charge tried to close his lecture room, but Fichte replied, "You may shoot me as you shot Palm, but while I live my voice shall not be silent," and for fourteen lectures he rang the changes upon the doctrine of which this was the thesis: "Education, as hitherto conducted by the church, has aimed only at securing happiness in another life. This is not enough, inasmuch as men need also to be taught how to bear themselves in the present life, so as to do their duty to the state, to others and to themselves. A system of national education, properly adjusted and conducted, will work so powerfully upon the people of the nation that in a few years they will be completely transformed. Nothing but education can secure us from the miseries that

overwhelm us. On you it depends," finally exclaimed the orator, "whether you will be the end and the last of a race worthy of little respect and likely to be despised, or whether you will be the beginning and germ of a new time that will be glorious beyond all your imaginations, and from which posterity will reckon the years of their welfare."

This was the beginning of that systematic and elaborate educational policy which first made Prussia the school-master of civilization, the Mecca of students from all parts of the world, and finally made Prussia as superior to France in 1870 as France had been superior to Prussia in 1806.

At a still later period a similar power was felt. When the baleful influence of Metternich threatened to undo all that had been gained by the revolutionary ideas of the Napoleonic period and sought to bring back all the horrors of the Hapsburgs and the Bourbons, who was it but the five Göttingen professors and such university poets as Kinkel and such students as Carl Schurz that cried out "No!" and organized the revolutionary movement of 1848.

The same tendency has shown itself in our own country. If there was anything to justify the terrible impeachment of Harvard by Wendell Phillips it was to be found in the traditional adhesion of that illustrious institution to the old English ideals. Such an impeachment could never have found place in any court against one of the state universities, for here students and graduates have everywhere thrown themselves into active political life. It has been only a natural result of this spirit that the university of our land which has had the greatest number of representatives in the last three Congresses has been not one of the older universities of the East, but one of the state universities of the Middle West.

This interesting result, which has come to us easily and naturally, is one of the favorable signs of the times. Are we not all exhilarated by the thought that the standards

lifted up by education are in the end the favorites of the Goddess of Success?

But this great fact brings its responsibilities and its obligations. Let us not suppose that success is a mere matter of getting into positions of responsibility and trust. Alas, no! It means nothing less than an intellectual adaptation and application of the knowledge of the times to the great questions with which the statesman and the politician have to deal.

Nothing is plainer than that the drift of civilization during the past three hundred years has changed the sources of political power. In the days of Henry and Elizabeth the sources were everywhere, in fact, if not in theory, as much in the hands of the ruler as today they are in the hands of the Czar and the Sultan. But independence of thought in religious matters could not stop short of independence of thought in matters political. The English Revolution, which overthrew the doctrine of Divine Right had a philosophical basis akin to that which was the fundamental cause of the Thirty Years' War. But the old idea died hard. It resisted death for more than one hundred years; for it was not until the yeast of the eighteenth century had brought on the ferment of the American Revolution and the French Revolution, that the reactionary struggle of the Georges came to an end, and the way was prepared for the political advent of the people and the progress of the nineteenth century.

America was founded as a protest against royal oppression; it was not founded as a protest against royalty! Nor was the idea prevalent that the affairs of the new commonwealth were to be entrusted to the directing influence of the mass of the people. Even Massachusetts was an aristocratic republic, to the political privileges and responsibilities of which only a favored few were admitted. The political state was a kind of close corporation, and it admitted only those whom it chose. To be inducted into the

rights of a freeman was a public ceremony, and so carefully was the door guarded, that all the functions of government were administered by what we should now call the most intelligent and influential of the people. To us at least it must be an impressive fact that even at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War the number of voters in the province was only about one in thirty of the population. If, at the present day, we were to group all the voters in our towns and cities together and select out one in six, and intrust to the persons so selected all local as well as political authority, we should have a state of political organization analogous to that which existed one hundred and twenty-five years ago. The thought of what we now call "universal suffrage" had hardly then entered into the mind of even the most advanced politician.

But, as a great philosopher of that age said: "Tendencies are stronger than men." The rights of man so loudly proclaimed by Helvetius and Rousseau and others in France were echoed by Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson in America. The doctrine flowed with the drift of civilization and it could not be resisted. State after state broadened the doors of ingress to political duties and obligations. One after another the barriers were burned away. If the doctrine that "all men are created equal" had any meaning, it meant that all men have equal rights. The logic was irresistible and the consequence has been a political and social transformation, and we have the conditions which confront us at the present day,

Undoubtedly the largest and most important results of this great tendency have been a more active and a more general participation in political affairs. We must not overlook or belittle this beneficent consequence. It has unquestionably resulted in the extension of political ideas to vast numbers of the people. But even the most enthusiastic American will hardly deny that this great result has been accompanied with some embarrassments. It is cer-

tainly our duty to look at the evil as well as the good. The stations and the road-bed and the rolling-stock of a great railway may be ever so well constructed and the coaches may be ever so luxurious, yet if the bridges are broken or weak, the trains cannot pass with safety. Every engineer will tell you that if the boilers in your great ship are unable to bear the strain, if the engines are inadequate, if the engineers are ignorant or careless, if there is weakness at any single spot, there can be no assurance of a successful voyage. There is no guarantee of success or safety in the mere possession of the most perfect form, or of the most powerful armament. The conditions require that all the elements of weakness shall be carefully inspected, and, as far as possible, removed.

It is not true that universal suffrage puts ignorance on a par with intelligence, but it cannot be denied that it gives political knavery a chance. It has glutted the market with immorality. In some of our states it has filled the rural district with "floaters," whose commercial value is as well known by the political managers as the price of sugar or standard oil. In very many of our large cities it has converted the process of an election into a political debauch. If the rational basis of an election is the fact that it is the most practicable method of testing the reason and judgment of the people on the question at issue; it has too often degenerated into a method of persuading people not more by reason than by promises of office and promises of money. Nobody will deny that the power of office and of money has been enormously increased in the last twenty-five years. This growth has been coincident with the extension of the suffrage. To give money for votes is conceded by everybody to be politically immoral, but to give office for votes is vastly worse, for it not only debauches the political conscience, but tends to drive ability and honesty into obscurity and to thrust incapacity and dishonesty into positions of official responsibility. It has done

more than all other causes put together to bring about a condition in our cities which led one of the best informed judges of such matters our country has ever known to declare that there is no other country in all the nations of the civilized world in which the cities are so badly governed as in our own. It has led the political manager to relegate the Golden Rule to the rubbish heap of obsolete nonsense. In the place of the maxim, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," it raises aloft in its place, like a brazen serpent, the shameless substitute, "Do up your political opponent before he has a chance to do you up."

The process of an election, whether political or not, generally has to do with three elements. In the first place there are those whose ideas on the question at issue and whose character are known to be fixed, and upon whom, in consequence, persuasion of any kind is rarely attempted. Then there are those who are not married to any party and whose ideas are subject to revision by rational argument. The third class is made up of those who go into politics, as they call it, not for what they can do, but for what they can get. The tendency ever is for the third class to increase at the expense of the other two, and it is not too much to say that the success of our political life will depend upon our ability to keep this third class under control. Our city governments have during the past quarter of a century been so bad because in this effort we have hitherto not been successful. If ever the oft-quoted and melancholy predictions of Macaulay are fulfilled, it will be because of failure at this very point.

There is everywhere at the present time a feeling of unrest, and it cannot be denied that the questions confronting American society are the most subtle and difficult we have ever had. Does any intelligent person suppose that they are mere questions of tariff, or mere questions of silver, or mere questions of revenue; important as these undoubtedly are? They are as much questions of

the fundamental rights of men as were the questions which converted the republic of the Gracchi and of Cicero into the empire of Nero, and then hastened it to its inevitable destruction. How these mighty questions are to be settled depends not upon this or that law of Congress, but upon the pervasiveness of lofty intellectual and moral ideals.

If education in its various grades and branches could convert the Prussia of 1810 into the Prussia of 1870, is there any doubt as to what education can do for the republic? Hitherto we have been possessed with a spirit that would give to this question an answer of practical listlessness and indifference. We have been content with the half-gods, though "it is not until the half-gods go, that the gods arrive." We have rested upon the shallow and sophistical doctrine that the hope and the security of the country is in the common schools. We have acted upon the silly supposition that the foundation is the edifice; for a part of the people, at least, have adopted the doctrine that is equally false and destructive,—that if the state lays the foundation, voluntary benevolence will complete the structure. No greater fallacy or absurdity ever beguiled any people.

Let it not be supposed that I decry the importance of the common schools. On the contrary, I believe they are not half cared for. They are often poorly administered; they often have inefficient teachers; they often do not do one-half what they should for the best of their pupils; and when they have done their work, they leave a large percentage of the people above ten years of age, who can neither write nor read. By all means improve the common schools in every possible way; but my chief contention is that even if they were perfect, they could not do the work that must be done, if the state and the institutions are to be guided aright.

I know that the Goddess of History is by no means omnipotent. Clio is often foolishly invoked and is often in-

voked in vain. While history sometimes repeats itself, circumstances are never twice alike. No deluge of patent medicines can supersede the supremacy of intelligent physicians. Every troublesome case must have its own diagnosis; and every successful prescription must be the result of a new and a discriminating judgment. But while this is all true, will any one say that the history, even of medicine, is of no importance? Why has medicine modified its treatment of so many diseases within the last ten years? Does any physician of sense now deal with diseases with no reference whatever to what has been accomplished in the past? Is not the very acme of skill the adjustment and the discriminating application of all past knowledge to the individual case under consideration? Is not the ability to do this the very difference between the great physician and the Kickapoo medicine man?

And so it is in affairs of state. If calomel has never been known to relieve consumption or diphtheria, why rely upon calomel, even though calomel may be good for the liver? If the common schools have never saved or even built up a state, why suppose that the common schools can do it now? Did the Adamses, and the Jeffersons, and the Hamiltons, and the Madisons, and the other architects of this republic get their knowledge, or even their inspiration from the common schools? No, no! in this country, and everywhere, it has not been the valleys, but the mountain peaks and the intervening valleys, that have determined the political landscape. It has been chiefly the doctrine preached by the great leaders of public opinion that has given shape to current events. We may go even further than this and say that in the history of this country the influence and the power of the scholars in politics have been far greater than has commonly been supposed. Let us look at the matter for a moment.

There have been three great crises in the history of this nation: the Revolution, the critical period of the forma-

tion of the constitution, and the Civil War. Let us ask what were the controlling forces of public opinion in each of them.

John Adams in one of his masterly papers, written near the close of his life, calls attention to the fact that within the short space of five years before the famous Boston tea-party, a radical and remarkable change took place in the public opinion of the colonists toward the mother country. It has recently been shown that this change was not so much from an unwonted spirit of oppression in the mother country, as from a remarkable development of ideas among the colonists. The first volume of Professor Tyler's "Literary History of the Revolution" traces clearly for the first time the growth of this new public opinion. Not only was the country flooded with printed speeches and pamphlets, but the scholarship and power of these utterances would have done credit to any country in any age.

Of the speech of James Otis against the "Writs of Assistance" John Adams long afterwards wrote, that it was presented in a style of oratory that he had "never heard equalled in this or in any other country", and John Adams had been present at the trial of Hastings and had heard the speeches of Burke and Fox and Sheridan. Then came Otis' pamphlets "The Vindication" in 1762, and "The Rights of British Colonists" in 1764. These were soon followed by the masterful pamphlet of Oxenbridge Thatcher in the same year, entitled "Sentiments of a British American", in which the situation was analyzed with a logical acumen and a power which carried conviction to thousands of thoughtful minds which up to that time had been in doubt. Only two months later came the work of Stephen Hopkins, entitled "The Rights of the Colonist Examined," in which it was set forth that colonists, at all times, and, everywhere, have had the same rights as citizens of the mother country. The pamphlet was republished in nearly every colony and had a prodigious influence. Then in

August of 1764 came the four great papers of John Adams in the Boston Gazette, which were afterwards published in his works under the misleading title of "A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law"; in which he showed that the question at issue was not so much a matter of oppression, as a part of the great struggle between collectivism, on the one hand, and individualism, on the other, that had been coming on ever since the Reformation. The attitude of the colonists was shown to be in perfect accord with the inevitable trend and drift of the best elements of civilization. Three months later came the masterful pamphlet of Daniel Dulany on "The Propriety of Imposing Taxes on the British Colonists"; the object of which was to break down, and thus to destroy the imposing analogy between the situations and therefore between the obligations of the non-voting people in Great Britain and the non-voting people in America. Then the flood of published sermons hurled forth with tremendous energy from one of the foremost pulpits in Boston by Dr. Mayhew, spread far and wide the doctrine of individualism in politics as well as in religion. His eloquent contention was that every community was to decide for itself.

Now the matter to which I wish to call your attention is the fact that all of these utterances were issued before the great struggle really began by the imposition of the Stamp Act, and that really in advance of that great step public opinion was so firmly set that it was impossible for the people to meet the issue in any more than one way. What was done after that time by Samuel Adams, and John Adams, and Patrick Henry, and Thomas Payne, and John Dickinson, and the others was scarcely more than to elaborate and emphasize and make popular and practicable the doctrines already set forth by the writings I have named.

And who were these wonderful architects of public opinion. Every one of them, with a single exception, was a university scholar of more than ordinary attainments. Otis

was not only a graduate of Harvard, but he was so thoroughly permeated and soaked with a scholarly spirit that he could not satisfy his classical desires without publishing a work on Latin prosody and leaving a work on Greek prosody in manuscript. John Adams, also a Harvard man, brought to the service of his tremendous energies a vast accumulation of classical and historical knowledge. Daniel Dulany was a graduate of Eton and Cambridge and the Temple, and he soon established such a colossal reputation for legal learning that William Pinkney, who had a familiar acquaintance with the great orators of England, said of him that even among such men as Fox, Pitt, and Sheridan, there was no superior to this barrister of the American province. Nor was the power of Dulany felt in America alone. Scarcely had three months elapsed after his first pamphlet was issued, when Pitt at the end of a long absence went to the House of Commons to advocate the repeal of the Stamp Act, and in a speech of tremendous power in favor of the immediate repeal and the final abandonment of Parliamentary taxation of the colonies, held aloft the pamphlet of Dulany and commended it to the admiration and approval of the imperial legislature; and an examination of the outline of Pitt's speech, which Professor Tyler has carefully made, reveals the fact that in all but one of the great features of his argument he followed the line of reasoning set forth by the American barrister.

Let us turn now to the critical period which followed the war.

The confederation, born of the military exigencies of the struggle, had proved a rope of sand, and had fallen asunder. A new and a stronger form of government was absolutely necessary to perpetuity. Well has it been denominated "the critical period" of our history. No one can contemplate the conflicting interests of state rights, of large states and small states, of slave owners and the advocates of freedom, of the democratic ideas and methods

that had come from the northern Puritan, and the aristocratic ideas and methods that had come from the southern cavalier, without seeing the stupendous difficulties that lay in the way of harmonizing these interests in a common agreement in the form of a federal constitution. Well may it be said that no greater triumph of statesmanship has ever been achieved than was accomplished in the settlement of these questions.

And who was it that brought together these conflicting interests and welded them into that revered instrument which we call the constitution? Whose were the minds that contributed what we may call the fundamental ideas of settlement and organization?

Of the 55 members more than half were college-bred men. No one who looks through Elliot's debates can fail to be impressed with the power and the gravity and the wisdom of the controlling minds of that convention. Valuable suggestions in regard to minor details came from different members and different quarters, but the fundamental lines, what may be called the keel of the constitution, that which determined the permanent form and character of the instrument, was the work of a very few leading minds. Careful scrutiny into the history of the convention has shown that much of the framework was really decided upon during the ten days which intervened after the first delegates arrived and before a majority had made its appearance. The fifteen famous resolutions presented by Governor Randolph, which really determined the fundamental character of the situation, were the result of repeated conferences in which the mind and ideas of James Madison were the most potent elements, and when the convention came to grapple with the great question of crucial significance—whether the government was to be essentially democratic, or essentially aristocratic in its character, the matter was finally settled by the wisdom and the words of James Wilson, whose declaration on the subject

is worthy of perpetual remembrance. Elbridge Gerry, the father of gerrymandering, had said "The people do not want virtue; they are the dupes of pretended patriots"; to which Wilson, who brought to the convention the learning of three Scotch universities, replied, "Without the confidence of the people, no government, least of all a republican government, can long subsist." And in elaboration of this great statement he made it evident to all that the popular branch of the national legislature must be elected directly by the people.

And in like form if we look through the controlling consideration which established the powers of the executive and judicial branches of the government, we shall see that they were presented and urged and secured by a few men, almost without exception college-bred, who had united a special study of the republics of the Old World with a large experience in the affairs of the individual states. It was these ideas, sometimes conflicting, and sometimes agreeing, which under the benign, and soothing, and harmonizing good sense of Washington and Franklin produced the great instrument which has given us so much prosperity. Its real character was determined by Madison, Wilson, and Hamilton, all of them college men, whose practical good sense enabled them, without pedantry or ostentation, to apply their great knowledge to the mighty problems before them.

More than that, when the Constitution had been framed, it was necessary that the states should be persuaded to adopt it, and everybody knows that the most potent influence in that process of persuasion was *The Federalist*, that great textbook of constitutional interpretation, written by Hamilton, Madison and Jay, college men, two from King's College, now Columbia, and one from Princeton.

And now if we pass on from the critical period of the formation to the period of interpretation, what do we find ?

Fifty years have developed conflicting interests. The

institutions of the south and the institutions of the north were no longer harmonious. The great question now arose whether under the constitution the states which feel themselves aggrieved must submit to the majority, or whether they might nullify the acts of congress and secede from the Union. The question was decided, no doubt, partly by the supreme court of the United States, partly by the president, and partly by congress.

How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!

No great question can be ultimately settled until it is settled by public opinion. But how was public opinion formed on this great issue? The fundamental question which lay underneath all others, and on which all others rested, was simply whether, in case of a real or supposed grievance, the the nation had sovereign authority or whether sovereign authority inhered in the individual states. All other questions of tariff or slavery, however noisily they might be discussed, were subordinate to that, and it is safe to say that the nation could not have been preserved, if the North had not been convinced that the South had no constitutional right to secede. All other questions were simply whether the reward would be worth the enormous price that would have to be paid. "At that time," as Seward once said in Detroit, "the North, like Gulliver, was bound down by every individual hair." But when the issue came, every minor restraint was torn asunder and the great question of right welded together the mighty resources of men and money, which brought the great argument to a successful close.

Now, what was it, that settled that question of right in public opinion? I think that history will give a clear and unequivocal answer. There were two men that were as unmistakably at the head of this great movement of interpretation as was Washington at the head of the Revolutionary war, or Lincoln at the head of the war for the

Union. Every lawyer will admit that the coherent and consistent form of this doctrine was established by a long succession of judicial decisions leading up one from another and extending over a period of thirty-four years, as promulgated by Chief Justice Marshall of the Supreme Court. And these same doctrines were brought to the public conscience of the people in a way never to be rooted out, by the speeches in the senate, in the courts, and on the platform, by Daniel Webster. No temporary obscurations, or detractions can prevent these transcendent services from ultimately placing Marshall, and Webster next to Washington and Lincoln in the Walhalla of the nation. And Chief Justice Marshall brought to his mighty service the training he had received at William and Mary, and Webster brought the training he had found at Dartmouth.

And now if I have established my thesis that in the three great crises of the national history the fundamental and predominant and successful ideas have been for the most part formulated and wrought into the national consciousness by college-bred men, it is fitting to ask whether college men were in condition to have greater influence in the past than they are likely to have in the future. Have we come to an age and a condition when public questions are less complicated, or less difficult? Have we arrived at a period of flat mediocrity, when everybody knows as much as anybody? If we have not, the scholar must be as prominent in the future as he has been in the past, and the only difference between the importance of the one and the importance of the other must be in the nature of the questions to be considered.

It is unquestionably true that, 'as civilization becomes more complicated, the questions that demand solution require more intelligence. The steam engines of Watt and Stephenson were simple affairs and easy of management, but the confusing wilderness of machines that work together to propel a modern battle-ship is enough to strike the

observer dumb with a consciousness of impotency. But this great representative of modern power is not more complicated than are the elements of modern civilization and political life. Does the engineer need to be less educated than did the engineer fifty or one hundred years ago? Does the company now intrust the machinery to untrained ability, no matter what the average intelligence of the crew may be?

It has been for the purpose of meeting the public demands that so many schools for the special training of men for the public service have recently been established. Twenty-five years ago the largest of our universities had to be content with a single professor of history and a single professor of political economy, of whom the public impression was that he was simply a professor of free trade. It is the story of the steam engine over again. The demand had produced the supply, and we must have a dozen professors and instructors where formerly there was only one.

The highest work of the scholar is in the formation of public opinion. It is as true now as it was in the three great periods of which I have spoken that the special sphere of the men of most thorough training is that of molding and shaping the thoughts of the people. It may not be desirable for a young man to have office. Indeed, it is probably a great misfortune for a young man to be bitten with the desire to be elected to something. It is likely to ruin his professional prospects, and, sooner or later, leave him stranded. Let him work; let him wait, until he has made a reputation that can afford to be cast up high and dry; but in the meantime he must not be indifferent to what is going on. Young gentlemen—and I will say young ladies, as well,—you will but poorly requite the State for what it has done for you, if you fold your hands indifferently to the course of current affairs. Do not seek for office, but strive in every practicable way to in-

fluence public opinion on the various questions of the day. You will have no right to the distinction of being regarded as scholars fit for the time, unless you have opinions that have been carefully considered and matured. Some years ago, in one of his great orations, Emerson said:

"Neither years nor books have yet availed to extirpate a prejudice rooted in me that a scholar is the favorite of heaven and earth, the excellency of the country, the happiest of men."

And twenty-five years later George William Curtis said that "The philosophers and the poets are like trees of golden fruit in the landscape."

But when mighty questions are agitating the public, it will not do for the scholar to wrap his robes of sanctity about him and abstain from the conflict. Let him remember the endless infamy of the Priest and the Levite, because they passed by on the other side. Let him know that the citizen's duty is never discharged by simply thrusting a bit of paper through a slit in the top of a box. Worthy citizenship is far more than that. A man may vote as regularly as election comes, and yet fail of his political duty, just as the Pharisee, who gave tithes of all he possessed and fasted three times a week, lacked the very heart of religious obligation.

It is notorious that he who does nothing but vote is often perplexed because he is confronted with a choice between evils. He finds that the preliminary choice has been fixed, and, as George William Curtis once said, "he must choose to vote either for Jeremy Diddler, or Dick Terpin." You can only rid yourself of your entire responsibility if you do all you can to prevent such an alternative, for when you march up to the ballot box you only aid in putting in the keystone of the arch that has already been designed and all but completed. If you have had nothing to do with the preliminary plans and determinations, you can never claim to have done your full part.

The settlement of the currency, the question of revenue, the relations of the rich and the poor, the legitimate power of corporations, the adjustment of taxes, the government of cities; these are indeed mighty questions which can never be settled except by one method, and that method is by what in a large way may be called the enlightend intelligence,—that is to say, the scholarship of the country. In regard to every single point at issue the most enlightened opinion must express itself so clearly and forcefully that it will commend itself with overwhelming power. The human heart is just, and if the traitor to humanity escapes his proper doom, it will be because those who have been trained to be the leaders of thought have fallen short of their high behest. The magnitude of the scholar's duty is to be measured only by the magnitude of the questions that confront him.

It is the duty of the scholar not only to be the leader of public opinion, but also to be "an embodiment of public conscience." It is not enough simply to do; it is necessary also to do right. The more an evil spirit is educated, the greater its power, and the worse it is for the world. The fundamental virtues are as necessary for political and social duties as they are for individual life. Upright and downright truth and honesty at all times are as essential as knowledge. It is now, as it always has been, the complete amalgamation of these great elements of power that constitutes the embodiment of the public intelligence and the public conscience—the Upper House in the politics of the world.

This is no time for what Milton called "the fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, when that immortal garland is to be run for."

It is a time when every scholar should gird up his loins for public, as well as for private duty, and with courage, with intelligence, and with unswerving virtue, do what he

can for the state and the nation which have placed him under such illimitable obligations.

If your Alma Mater could speak to you as you leave these halls, I imagine her parting words might be:

“Farewell! Your heart to mine conveys the thrill
 Of restless thought, of new untried desires;
 The sun itself has not more burning fires,
 Or seeks the more a purpose to fulfill
 Than ye, who with youth’s strength and dauntless will,
 Look longingly toward noon; see distant spires,
 Answering to music of celestial choirs,
 Your fair Hope faithful to its promise still.
 O reverently go, as into vale
 Sacred to rising day! With rainbow light
 Its storms illumine! Touch firm and sure the sod
 Of earth; yet towering heights beyond assail
 And win! Make darkness by your being bright,
 And prove yourselves in partnership with God!”

